

MAKING SENSE OF THE FUTURE



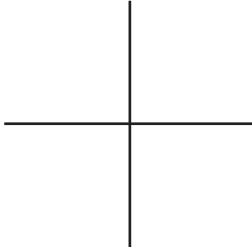
Answer by moving



Your stance towards and impact on digital futures

This exercise is an effective introduction. Position yourselves in the room and discuss your attitudes and capacities. Find out whether you have an optimistic or pessimistic view of digital future(s).

⌚	30–60 min	★☆☆	introductory
👥	group of at least 3	🖋️🔪	printouts, utensils and space

INTRO	Answer by moving	2
<p style="text-align: center;">“Before being a method or a discipline, foresight is an attitude.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Berger, G. (1959) <i>L'attitude prospective</i>.</p>		
<p>The fundamental question, “where do you stand?” in relation to futures, is inspired by the dutch futurist Fred Polak (The Image of the Future) and crystalised by Peter Hayward and Stuart Candy. This tool enables the discovery of different perspectives on our future reality.</p> <p>At its core, the ‘Polak Game’ (the principle of which is applied in this tool) introduces the central concept of future imagery. Everyone tends to have an opinion on technical developments and innovations or the social process that goes along with digitalisation, even though they may not have thought about them much (yet). Let's go!</p> <p>The exercise requires the participants to position themselves within the following coordinates and discuss their stance.</p>		
ASSIGNMENT	Position yourself in the room, using four poles of an axis about attitude and agency towards the digital future. Find out whether you have an optimistic or pessimistic attitude and how you rate your ability to act in the future. Where do the other participants stand? Can these perspectives be exchanged, discussed, criticised and transformed?	
LEARNING GOAL	This exercise functions as a dynamic mood barometer in the room. The positioning in the room enables an introductory discussion on the topic of digital futures.	
PREPARATION	Print the four poles of the axis. If you wish, laminate them. Draw the below graphic as an explanatory visualisation on a flipchart or large sheet of paper. Mark the four poles of the axis in the room by hanging up the printouts, with tape or similar. The four poles should be far enough apart so that the participants can move freely in the room.	

MANUAL	Answer by moving	3
LET'S START	<p>One of the participants takes the role of a moderator: decide who is taking this role.</p> <p>Moderator: For the following exercise, every participant should think of a specific sector or aspect of society and consider how you think it will be improved or worsened by digitalisation. You can think very broadly and in terms of society as a whole (sustainability, climate crisis, healthcare, democratic processes, the world of work, the education system, administration) or in terms of low-threshold/small-scale technical achievements (special apps, new technical inventions, changes to already existing structures). For now, keep your imagined topic to yourself.</p>	
	<div data-bbox="571 775 1390 1346"> <div data-bbox="863 775 1106 887">Digitalisation makes the world a better place.</div> <div data-bbox="571 965 815 1122">My ability to act is diminished by digitalisation. I can't influence things.</div> <div data-bbox="858 943 1110 1189">  </div> <div data-bbox="1161 965 1390 1122">My ability to act is increased by digitalisation. I can influence things.</div> <div data-bbox="863 1234 1106 1346">Digitalisation makes the world a worse place.</div> </div>	
STEP 1	<p>Moderator: The first move reveals your expectations for the digital future. The two statements of this axis are:</p> <p>Digitalisation makes the world a better place. — Digitalisation makes the world a worse place.</p> <p>Cast your imagination one generation forward, towards the year 2040. Do you expect the world to be better than the one we live in (as defined by you), or do you imagine it as being worse?</p> <p>If you are optimistic about how digitalisation will affect the world towards the year 2040 then you should move towards the respective mark. The stronger that feeling is, the further forward you should step.</p> <p>If, on the other hand, you are pessimistic or sceptical about the impact of digitalisation on the state of the world in 2040, then take a step towards the opposite mark. The more strongly you feel that way, the further you should move.</p>	

MANUAL	Answer by moving	4
	<p>There is a subjective judgement at play here which is fine – that's what this exercise requires.</p> <p>Go! Move as far forward or as far back as you like!</p>	
STEP 2	<p>Moderator: The next question is about your ability to act in the digital society. How do you see your personal agency in the digital world and your potential to influence social processes? The two statements of the axis are:</p> <p>My ability to act is increased by digitalisation. I can influence things. — My ability to act is diminished by digitalisation. I can't influence things.</p> <p>Adjust your stance accordingly – along your position from the previous move. Go!</p>	
STEP 3	<p>Speak with the other participants and discover why they are standing where they are.</p>	
	<p>GUIDING QUESTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why are you standing where you are? ▪ What aspect or sector of the digital world were you thinking about exactly? ▪ What is it exactly that makes you optimistic/pessimistic? ▪ If you think your capability to act in the digital world is low/high, why is that? ▪ What exactly limits your ability to act? To what extent do you see your ability to act as being encouraged or promoted? ▪ What would it take for you to move towards the optimistic side? 	
STEP 4	<p>Swap places with one person at a time and take their perspective. Share and discuss your imagined examples. Are you able to take or influence the other person's position?</p> <p>If all the participants are in about the same place, tell each other about the specific sector or aspect of society you had in mind and try to persuade each other to take a more optimistic view.</p>	
	<p>CONTINUE WITH OUR TOOLBOX</p> <p>For a different take on digital futures, try the tool: Act up for Change!</p>	

EXTRAS	Answer by moving	5
<p>SOURCES</p>	<p>Strategic Foresight ^{FR}</p> <p>Berger, G. (1959) L'attitude prospective. In: Philippe Durance (Ed.) (1955-1966): <i>Textes fondamentaux de la prospective française</i>. L'Harmattan, Paris, https://atelierdesfuturs.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/attitude-prospective-g-berger-1959.pdf</p> <p>Polak Game ^{EN}</p> <p>Candy, S. & Hayward, P. (2017) The Polak Game, Or: Where Do You Stand? <i>Journal of Futures Studies</i>, https://jfsdigital.org/articles-and-essays/2017-2/the-polak-game-or-where-do-you-stand</p>	

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